

Zootopia: It Takes Three

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Summary: The sequel to A Tail of Two: When the Night Howler threat rises again brand new couple Nick and Judy race against time to stop it. But when past demons come to haunt them they wonder if they're strong enough to solve the case and stay together.

1. Chapter 1

Prolouge:

A mother sugar glider crouched under her baby's crib, holding her sniffing daughter to her chest as she heard ferocious banging and snarls at the front door.

Someone was trying to break in.

She had come to wish her daughter good night when she heard the noises, keeping her from her room where her phone sat.

She flinched as she heard the door being torn off its hinges and the sound of paws.

"Where is she," a growl-y voice snapped and the sugar glider shuddered.

"Find her," a deeper voice ordered, "Tear up the place while you're at it. The boss said leave nothing unscathed."

Her eyes widened upon hearing those words. This wasn't a random break in, she was being hunted.

She heard crashes and shattering as the intruders ransacked her home, she looked around nervously. It wouldn't take long for them to find her in here—find her and her child.

She slipped out from under the crib and hurried to the closet,

placing her whimpering daughter into a hamper and wrapping clothes around her, soothing her until she quieted down, shutting the door to a crack, her baby didn't like the dark.

And then the mother stepped into the center of the room and waited just as she heard a body slam into a door.

The young daughter listened quietly as she heard snarling and grown ups talking, a small struggle, and then fading footsteps, and then there was silence.

She waited for her mother to return and tuck her into bed but no one came as time ticked away and she got more and more sleepy.

"Mamaâ€¦" she whispered sadly as she curled into a ball,
"Mamaâ€¦"

2. Chapter 2

Ch. 1: The New Transfer

Judy's heart pounded wildly against her ribs, her eyes sealed shut and ears laid back. She stayed perfectly still; trying to make her breath shallow to cast the illusion she was asleep. Then a growling rumbled through the room.

He was here.

She felt hot breath against her fur and she braced herself ready to bolt, she then felt a nuzzle against the small of her back.

She kicked out and tried to move to the left to escape but then felt a paw on her arm and she was pulled back on the bed and onto her back.

She let out a yelp that quickly broke into laughter as her face and neck were smothered with kisses.

"N-Nick," she laughed, trying and failing to push him off her,
"_Stop_!"

The fox snickered against her neck before running his paws over his girlfriend's ribs, tickling her.

Judy laughed harder, tears coming to her eyes as she reached out and tickled his neck, causing him to laugh along with her. A minute later the two forfeited and laid entangled, catching their breath, smiles making their mouths ache.

"You-you're trying to distract me," Judy accused light-heartedly.

"Heh," Nick smirked. "What makes you say that, Carrots? Why would I keep us from getting out of bed earlier than usual to jog in the freezing cold?"

She rolled her eyes, "I already told you, you didn't have to come. Clawhauser and I can jog by ourselves."

"And trust that cheetah to defend you against whatever early morning freaks you run into. No thanks."

"I can take care of myself," she assured.

"You can't kick every weirdo you meet in the face."

Judy gasped, "I wouldn't!"

On the bedside table her phone buzzed with a message and she slipped out of Nick's arms to check her new message.

"Clawhauser's waiting," she told the fox, jumping out of bed to grab her jacket. They were both already outfitted in jogging clothes, "Let's go."

Nick let out a suffering sigh before dragging himself off the bed and following her.

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Clawhauser was at the park already when they arrived, also decked out in jogging gear and wearing earphones. Judy could hear Gazelle blasting through them.

"Sorry we're late," Judy apologized, Nick trailing after her with little enthusiasm.

"WHAT?" Clawhauser yelled, making Judy jump and Nick to lean back.

"Oh," the cheetah gasped and pulled out the earphones, "Sorry."

"It's okay," Judy replied, "Ready to run?"

He nodded enthusiastically, "Oh, yeah I'm ready to lose all this baggage-" he patted his stomach- "And get super ripped to where no one will recognize me!"

But despite Clawhauser's earnest it didn't take long for him to become a panting, sweaty mess. Nick wasn't fairing much better.

Meanwhile Judy was always a few feet ahead of them even when she tried to slow down for them to catch up.

"Come on, boys," she called after them over her shoulder, "One foot after another." She then tried singing for motivation: "I won't give up; I won't give in until I reach the end AND THEN I'LL START AGAIN!"<p>

"START AGAIN," Nick gasped in horror as Clawhauser tried to sing along between gasps.

"It's just a song, sweetie," she called over her shoulder.

It was then she noticed a figure jogging after them, he passed Nick and Clawhauser effortlessly and she saw it was a white-tailed deer.

He came up to her side and offered her a friendly smile with a challenging gleam in his eyes as he ran ahead. Judy glanced behind her, Nick, reading her expression, shooed her onward. She immediately put on a burst of speed, racing after the deer.

He blinked in surprise when she caught up to him then grinned before continuing down the track, Judy doing her best to keep up.

But then a turn came up ahead and Judy nearly went off the path, forced to skid to a halt. The deer slowed down for a moment, checking to make sure she was alright, before nodding to her and continuing his run.

Judy stood; catching her breath and watching him go while Nick and Clawhauser reached her side.

Nick rested his chin atop her head; practically leaning against her while Clawhauser placed his paws on his knees and looked like he was ready to faint.

"Aw," Judy cooed, looking at her two friends in sympathy. She patted Nick's cheek, "How about I buy you boys some celebratory donuts?"

"I love you," Nick wheezed, "But I think this is it."

He fell to the ground, "Tell mother I'm sorryâ€¦and-and tell Bogo the key is under my chair."

"What key?" Judy asked while Clawhauser fell down onto his back.

But Nick already had his eyes closed, his tongue lolling from the side of his mouth.

Judy rolled her eyes fondly.

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After feasting on morning donuts and cleaning up the three friends arrived at the precinct, fresh-faced and in uniform.

"See you after work," Clawhauser waved at them as he headed to his desk.

Judy and Nick headed to the bull-pin where they sat in their usual seat. When Bogo finally walked into the room a familiar mammal followed after him. Judy's jaw went slack when he passed her, it was that deer!

But now he was wearing a ZPD uniform. She looked to Nick who recognized him as well if his expression was anything to go by.

"Everyone, we have a new transfer," Bogo commanded the room's attention with his booming voice.

"This is Officer Aaron Ronno all the way from Evergreen City. He's here to help us with any and all assignments and cases and I expect _all _of you to behave and not embarrass our department." Despite the emphasis on 'all' Bogo's eyes never left Nick who just smirked.

Aaron followed the chief's glare, his own eyes widening when he spotted Judy who waved.

The deer was placed on the table opposite of Judy and Nick, his back straight and completely professional as Bogo assigned duties to the crew.

Nick and Judy were assigned to Central Square where vandalism had been going rapid.

But before they made it out of the building Aaron hurried over to them, "Wait, wait!"

The two stopped in surprise, the deer's eyes were wide with excitement.

"You're Judy Hopps!" he declared, pointing at her then to Nick, "And you're Nick Wilde!"

"Yes, yes we are," Nick replied, looking around warily as if he expected the deer to turn on them.

"I can't believe I didn't recognize you at the park," Aaron buried his face in his hooves. "And I'm such a big fan!"

Judy smiled, "Are you?"

He looked down at her like he thought she was joking, "Of course, I heard all about your Night Howler case and then you turned around and solved the Ironclaw case as well. You two are amazing!"

He shut his mouth quickly, suddenly looking mortified, "And now I'm being weird I am so sorry."

"That's fine," Nick stepped forward, "But let's get to our assignments, we have a duty to protect and serve."

Aaron saluted him, "Yes, sir!" and then he hurried off.

"Sir?" Nick echoed, pulling on his collar with a proud look.

Judy laughed, "He's cute. But don't let that hero worshipping get to your head."

She took his paw and gave it a soft squeeze, "Let's go protect and serve."

3. Chapter 3

Ch. 2: Maternal Instinct

As the duo drove to Central Square Judy wondered if they would end up catching any gangsters.

"Maybe a tiger covered in piercings?" she thought aloud. "Or a rough and tough honey badger with a deep, gravelly voice." She had lowered her own voice at the last three words.

"Carrots, I hate to break it to ya," Nick interjected, "But odds are the only vandals we'll find are a pack of preteens trying to be 'edgy'."

>Judy frowned but then looked at the fox slyly, "Nick?"
"Hm?"

>"Were you ever edgy as a kid?"<p>

His jaw dropped, "What are you insinuating, Fluff?"

"I just can't see you being a quiet teenager who kept his nose clean."

"Never said I was," Nick replied, "But it's seriously hurtful you would assume the truth. I thought we were friends."

>"You're right, Nick," she smiled, "I apologize."
They drove in silence for a few minutes before Nick turned to her, "Is there a reason you want to catch pierced tigers and deep-voiced badgers?"

"You saw right through me, huh?"

"I know my bunny."

Judy tapped the steering wheel with her fingers, "I've just been thinkingâ€¦it's been a year since the Ironclaw case and I think we're ready to be detectives. Or at least prove that we're ready."

Nick looked at her, "You're always so ambitious, Carrots."

"That's a good thing," Judy said.

"Yeah but there's a fine line between ambitious and reckless," Nick reminded her.

Judy knew that, and she wasn't asking for something as dangerous as the Ironclaw case, just something big enough to prove she was ready to Bogo, even if it was just a random theft.

Judy opened her mouth to tell Nick this when they turned a corner and immediately hit a traffic jam.

Her brow furrowed hearing the cars honk angrily, something was blocking the way.

"Take the wheel, Nick," Judy told him, "I'll be right back."

She jumped out of the car and slid between the vehicles, ignoring Nick who called her back. The thing blocking the road was the last thing she had expected.

It was a baby sugar glider.

She had deep brown fur and was wearing only a diaper, her blue eyes big and moist as she stared at the loud cars, looking like she would start crying.

Judy glared at the angry drivers before slowing walking over to the baby, not wanting to startle her and have her running off.

"Come here, sweetie," she spoke in the reassuring tone she used with

her younger siblings. She kneeled down next to the sugar glider who stared up at her with giant eyes. Slowly she crept forward to Judy's offered paw, climbing onto her palm. Judy stood up and held the baby to her heart, she was shivering but her fur was warm so it wasn't that she was cold. Those blue eyes stared up at her and Judy's heart went out to the poor baby. She reminded her of all her little siblings and cousins, nieces and nephews. Judy walked back to the patrol car while the cars started to move now that the baby was out of the way.

Nick stared in horror as Judy climbed back into the driver's seat, the baby snuggled in her arm.

"You were gone for thirty seconds, Carrots," Nick stared at the baby. "Thirty seconds!"

"She's lost," Judy told him, the little mammal had turned her big eyes on Nick. "We need to find her parents. Vandalism will have to wait."

"How are we going to do that?" Nick asked.

Judy offered the baby to Nick but the sugar glider started to cry when Nick reached for her. The fox frowned and dropped his paws, "She's scared of me."

"That's just because she doesn't know you," Judy quickly assured him. She placed the sugar glider in the middle of the seat and the baby immediately scurried over to curl up at Judy's thigh.

"But to answer your first question," Judy continued, "City Hall of course, we have an eternal in."

Nick rolled his eyes, knowing exactly who she was talking about.

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With the baby in her arms Judy walked into City Hall with Nick following behind, his paws in his pockets.

A few mammals cast them curious looks but didn't say anything as they walked to the door that said 'Assistant Mayor'. Judy knocked.

"Come in," a voice called.

Inside boxes full of paper, books, and the odd knick knack or two lay sprawled around Percy's new office. The rabbit smiled happily at them from where he was placing a plant on his desk. "Judy! Nick! Look at this place! It's huge and has a great view and-" his smile faded when he saw the sugar glider in Judy's arms-"And you two have a baby. Uhâ€|" he looked to Judy then to Nick then back again. "Congratulations?"

Judy flushed when she realized his misunderstanding, "Oh, no! She's not ours."

Nick frowned at her; she had sounded a little too frightened by the thought.

"We found her out near Central Square," she explained, "We were hoping you could tell us who her parents are."

Percy walked over, "I don't know. I can try but there are a lot of sugar gliders in Zoo- Never mind I know whose daughter that is."

Judy and Nick exchanged glances.

"Wellâ€¦that's impressive," Nick replied. "You have one good memory."

"I know here because I've met her mother," Percy explained, his eyes suddenly dark. "That's Suzy, the daughter of Eleanor Sugar."

"Eleanor Sugar?" Judy echoed.

"The scientist who created the Night Howler antidote."

4. Chapter 4

Ch. 3: Deeper

Eleanor Sugar was into the medical sciences and had created many medicines. The Night Howler was the most famous. Point being she made big money and where she lived proved that.

The Hill was a very nice very large apartment complex. The distinct thing about it was that it was split in half, and each floor consisted of only two rooms parted by the elevator. And the rooms were very nice and very large, so naturally you had to be filthy rich to live there.

And Eleanor Sugar was.

"How did Suzy get out without her mother seeing?" Nick wondered as they stepped out of the car and headed to the lobby. "And why hasn't her mother sent in a missing mammal call?"

Judy peered up at the building, it was a grayish blue color, the sun shining on it to give it a pink cast and it looked like it was made of the smoothest metal. She then pointed at an open window, "That looks like it could be Eleanor's floor, Percy said it was the seventh one. Maybe the little rascal glided out of the window, landed on the balcony below and kept going until she landed on the floor. As for why Eleanor hasn't called inâ€¦maybe Suzy is supposed to be taking her nap and hasn't been gone long enough for her mother to check on her."

The landlord was an armadillo that reminded Judy of her old landlady, but he was much snottier, giving them a pompous once over and looking like he was calculating how dirty/poor they were. But he did look surprised to see Suzy, riding atop Judy's head, and confessed he hadn't seen Eleanor since last night.

"She's usually very busy," the armadillo told them. He led them to the elevator where they crowded in and the young sheep bellhop clicked on the seventh button. "She's a very intelligent you know,

created the antidote for the Night Howler incident. Did you know that?"

"Oh yeah," Nick pulled his lips back in a fake grin. "We were actually the one who solved that case, believe it or not."

"Oh, that's why you two seemed so familiar," he said, looking them up and down again. His eyes stayed on Judy, "But weren't you the one who told everyone the predators' biology was to blame."

"Here we are," the sheep suddenly spoke a little too loudly. Clearly he had felt the sudden tension in the air despite not seeing Judy's shocked expression and Nick's glare.

The elevator doors (one on the right and one on the left) slid open in unison. The landlord pointed to the right and the two cops and sugar glider instantly exited the elevator.

The doors slid close with a ding and Nick turned around and snarled, "Unbelievable!"

"Don't worry about it, Nick," Judy told him, walking down the hall. It was carpeted in a blue that matched the outer paint of the building, the right wall was a ceiling to floor window that overlooked Central Square; it was a beautiful view.

"No, I am going to worry about it," Nick grumbled as they walked down the hall, Eleanor's door being at the end. "That-that-!"

"Nick, there's a baby present," Judy warned. Suzy snuggled into the rabbit's shoulder. "Think about something else."

"This entire building is unnecessary," Nick growled, "Its cut in half so a bunch of rich freaks can have an entire floor to themselves? Why don't they just buy an actual house? I swear, Carrots, it's almost like we're in some lazy crime/romance story and the writer doesn't know what they're doing!"

He stared up at the ceiling, "Almostâ€¦!"

They turned the corner then, ready to knock and return Suzy home, but the door was already open. Judy stopped seeing the door had been kicked off its hinges, she could see inside and it looked like a tornado had gone through. Furniture was flipped over, the TV was smashed, clothes, books, and toys strewn around the room.

Before Judy could see more Nick grabbed her and pulled her away, his grip on her shoulder tight. He was staring at the door with wide eyes, his entire body wound up like a spring.

"Eleanor could be in there," Judy hissed, scared to raise her voice.

"So could the mammals that did that," Nick shot back, just as quiet. "We need to call it in."

"Mama!" Suzy called, trying to jump off Judy's shoulder and run into the room. Judy quickly grabbed the baby and held the squirming child to her chest. "Mama! Mama!"

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They had called in the Forensics team before they entered Eleanor's home. The living room, kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms were destroyed. Everything toppled over, and damaged beyond repair. Judy had asked if they could find any paw prints but they believed the intruders had used gloves, but they would keep looking.

It at first seemed like it was simple but very violent vandalism. But the more Judy stared at the refrigerator where the food had been knocked down and then they shelves roughly and the closets scattered with torn clothing and opened boxes and she couldn't help but think the intruders were looking for something.

She now stood in Suzy's room. The crib had been flipped, the drawers open and clothes thrown; even her toy box had been ransacked.

"How did you manage to escape?" Judy looked down at the baby who was still saying calling for her mother, but now her voice had gone quiet and sad, as if she knew her mother wasn't coming back.

"I guess she hid," Nick answered as he walked into the room and stood at her side, his tail wrapping around her for comfort. "They must've gotten Eleanor in here; they didn't thoroughly trash this room like the rest of the apartment. And when they left she sneaked out of the window."

She looked up at him, "They?"

"I just can't believe only one mammal was able to do this much damage. I also can't believe no one heard anything, this place is completely destroyed."

"The walls are too thick," Judy looked at the ceiling as if she could see the family upstairs. "No one wanted to suffer noisy neighbors. I was always comforted by it, tired, but comforted."

Suzy suddenly started to wiggle and wail, Judy tired to rock her but the baby wasn't comforted.

"She must be hungry," Judy realized, "I'm going to try and find her formula."

Judy walked out of the bedroom but Nick stayed put, looking around the room. There was something nagging him in the back of his brain that he couldn't place and it was driving him crazy. He spotted something under the drawer and knelt, seeing it was a rattle. The color of gold with blue stripes, he shrugged and picked it up.

He found Judy out in the hall, feeding Suzy a bottle of milk.

"One of the forensics found the formula and her bottle in the kitchen," she informed him, not taking her eyes off the baby. "And Iâ€¦I didn't want to keep her in there."

Nick nodded, taking noticing how Judy's eyes were shimmering with affection. He lifted the rattle for Suzy to see and shook it gently, the baby's eyelids lowered in contentment.

Judy suddenly giggled and Nick looked at her. "What is it?"

"She just reminded me of you for a second," she smiled up at him.
"Your eyes droop like that when you give me _The Look_."

"_The Look_?"

Yes, the one where your eyes droop and you smile lazily and think you look all charming and irresistible. You gave me _The Look_ when we first met, when I threatened you with tax evasion, when we were at the Mystic Spring Oasis, the DMV, and every place after. You have given me _The Look_ for as long as I've known you Nicholas Wilde and it never has and never will work on me."

"First off," Nick began, "I think I'm charming and irresistible because I _am_. Second, you of all mammals _definitely_ can not resist _The Look_."

To prove his point his eyes dropped and he smiled lazily but it only made Judy roll her eyes, "Still not working."

Nick dropped _The Look_ and leaned against the hall's wall while the Forensics' team finished up.

Judy looked up at the ceiling, "Isn't there any surveillance cameras?"

Nick followed her look, "Yeah, you and me can go down and check it out when the Department of Family and Cubs Services get here."

Judy stared up at him in surprise, "What?"

Nick frowned at her, his brow furrowed, "Judy, you know the baby can't stay with us."

>Judy held Suzy closer, "But she needs to be taken care of!"<p>

"She will be, Judy, you know that. The Department is where she _needs_ to be. She'll be taken care of until Eleanor is found."

Judy's ears drooped and she gazed down at Suzy with a melancholy look in her eyes but Nick knew she wasn't going to argue with him.

"She was taken, wasn't she?" Judy breathed, "And it's because of the Night Howlers."

"Yeah," Nick replied, "I think so."

"Don't worry, Suzy," she told the little sugar glider. "We'll get your Mama back. Won't we, Nick?"

Nick nodded and winked at the baby, "You bet ya."

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Judy stood in the lobby, watching as the jaguar from the Department carried Suzy out to her car, the baby was now asleep, and clutching her little rattle like it was a doll. Judy swallowed past the lump in her throat; she would be fine, especially after she got her mother back.

Nick was standing behind the lobby counter with the landlord and a tiger from the Forensics. The three were studying the surveillance footage on a computer.

"By the way your cameras suck," Nick told the armadillo as Judy walked over. "I've watched pirated movies with better quality, the cheap pirated too."

Judy and the tiger looked at Nick who glared at them, "Oh, like you guys haven't either. Next you'll tell me you don't download your songs illegally off the internet."

The tiger glanced at Judy who just shook her head, a mammal was officially missing; Nick wasn't their biggest issue.

Together the four mammals stared at the screen that showed a gritty image of Eleanor's hall. Said sugar glider appeared on screen, carrying a bag of groceries with Suzy on her shoulder, Judy's heart squeezed.

"She doesn't have a father," she asked the landlord.

The armadillo shook his head, "Her husband died three years ago."

They turned back to the screen to see the small family walk safely into their apartment and shut the door behind them. They skipped forward so the time on the camera sped up, waiting for a figure to rush past the lens, for a paw to block it, for something! Just when the clock hit midnight the screen went to static.

The four stared at it, wondering if it was a glitch, before realizing that someone had cut the camera off at that exact time. The three cops turned to look at the landlord who was staring at the screen, flabbergasted. "I-I don't understand!"

"Oh I do," Nick growled, "Either the mammal running the surveillance at that time decided on a weird time to turn off the camera, or one of your staff had a paw in this."

"That's impossible!" the armadillo nearly spat, "No mammal who works for the Hill would dare try and steal our most important resident!"

"Obviously you don't," the tiger growled, staring at the static of the screen.

"Or someone was able to sneak into your surveillance room," Judy offered.

The tiger shook his head but spoke, "I'll have my boys sweep it."

"Meanwhile we need a list of all the mammals who'd have access to that room," Judy ordered the landlord. "Like it or not but there's a very good chance you work with the mammal who kidnapped Eleanor."

**Okay I'm hyped right now and I'll tell you guys why. I tweeted Rich Moore a question on Twitter and he answered! I know he's a great guy

who makes a habit on answering fan's question but still I nearly fainted. I asked him the question: "what exactly IS Nick saying when he makes those paw signals at the lab?" If you guys hang out on Tumblr odds are you've already seen it. But still, I needed to say this and get it out of my system. **

5. Chapter 5

Ch. 4: The Honey Episode

Nick and Judy were given a list of the mammals who had access to the surveillance room, with that list they traveled to the precinct and got a hold of the files of the listed mammals, trying to figure out who would help with a crime.

It was now morning and they hadâ€¦nothing.

"I refuse to believe not one of these mammals did something wrong in their entire lives," Judy said for the umpteenth time, rubbing her dry eyes.

"Well, I believe," Nick was lying his head on their desk, stacks of wrinkled files under his chin, his blood shot eyes were open wide as if that was the only thing keeping him awake.

"Carrots, these suspects are so squeaky clean I think you could actually eat off them. I could go outside right now and find a toddler with a bigger criminal record."

Judy sighed tiredly, thinking he was right. But then she thought about Suzy staying with strangers while her mother wasâ€¦Judy could only guess where. She had to figure this out.

"Hopps, Wilde," Bogo appeared beside their desk, making the two smaller mammals jump; they hadn't even heard him approach.

The buffalo had a sympathetic look in his eyes, "You two need to sleep."

"I can sleep when I'm dead," Judy replied, flipping through the files once again.

"I already am dead," Nick moaned.

Bogo let out a huff of annoyance, "I know this is an important case but you two aren't the only ones on it. Take a break and clear your mind and _then_ you can come back to it."

When Judy still looked stubborn Bogo looked around and spotted Aaron Ronno heading toward the precinct's door. "Ronno!"

The deer jumped slightly before looking over his shoulder and hurrying over to the chief where he saluted him, "Yes, sir?"

"I'm sending you to check that old honey factory right?" the buffalo asked.

Ronno nodded, "We've been getting calls that someone is illegally making honey."

Nick scowled, "That's a thing?"

Bogo nodded and turned back to the rabbit and fox, "You two go with him so you can have your case for the day, and when you're done go home and sleep."

"Sirâ€|" Judy started.

"That's an order, Hopps," Bogo broke in sternly before walking off.

Aaron grinned at the two with all the excitement of a cub meeting his favorite superheroes, "Ready to go?"

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"Oh, you're planning on making detective?"

Aaron was in the driver seat of his patrol car, Judy and Nick sharing passenger. Nick had his face pressed up against the glass and was 'resting' his eyes, Judy, sipping on a new cup of coffee was telling Aaron about her new ambition.

"I asked Bogo about it last night," Judy told him. "I told him if I solve the Eleanor Sugar case I want him to seriously consider making me a detective."

"And what'd he say?"

"I ran out before he could say no," Judy said with a helpless shrug.

The deer chuckled and then pulled into the road that led to the old factory, "Ironically enough this old factory used to make honey."

"Why is it illegal to make honey?" Nick asked. His sudden words making the other two start, so he really was resting his eyes.

"It used to not be," Aaron said. "But lately mammals have been adding alcohol to the honey and it's apparently very addicting and can get one drunk. I believe its street name is Winnie."

"Sounds nice and simple," Judy replied, and then leaned forward in her seat as the old factory appeared; Aaron brought the car to a halt.

"Have we any idea what the honeyshiners are like?" Judy asked as the three climbed out of the car and headed to the entrance door.

"I looked up a few older honeyshiner cases back in Evergreen, they're usually bears and they're pretty docile. They just want to have a drink, not start an illegal honey cartel."

"Still, a bear is bigger than all of us," Judy replied, loading a tranquilizer into her dart gun.

The door was barely hanging on its hinges which reminded Judy of Suzy's destroyed home but she quickly shook her head and followed

Aaron and Nick into the building. It was dusty and full of cobwebs, an old surveillance belt spread through the middle of the floor. Old boxes with the label of a cartoon bear were scattered around, full of empty, dusty honey jars.

Then there was the buzzing.

The three mammals' jaws dropped at the dozens of bee containers that were spread across the floor. Judy spotted a still that she guessed was what was used to mix the alcohol and honey.

Nick walked over to examine a box of bees, "I don't like this."

"Honeyshining is hardly the worse crime ever committed," Aaron replied, walking over to the still.

"Not that, I'm talking about these bees. A room with a bunch of bees has never ended with a happily ever after."

"Relax," Judy patted his shoulder, "They can't sting you while they're in a cage."

Judy's ears twitched suddenly and then a surprised noise had her turning around to see a white bear wearing punk cloths and holding another box of empty jars, she was staring at them in fearful shock.

"Casper Barret," Aaron hurried over to Nick to and Judy. "You are under arrest."

"She's a polar bear," Nick spoke up, "I thought polar bears don't do honey."

The bear scowled, "I'm not a polar bear, I'm a black bear who just happens to have white fur you blind-eyed jerk!"

Nick blinked in astonishment, taking a step back, "Uhâ€¦ Sorry?"

Aaron stepped forward then to his fellow cops' side, pulling out his pawcuffs and fixing Casper with a stern glare, "We need to take you in Miss Barret. And it would be good for all of us if you went in _quietly_."

The bear looked from him to Nick and Judy then let out a defeated sigh. "Very well," she carefully placed the box down, "Three against one, I known when I've been beat." Her amber eyes glanced at a bee container close to her side.

Judy and Aaron tensed up while Nick's eyes bulged, "Don't-"

Too late Casper lunged, knocking the container down before dashing back out the door. A swarm of angry bees flew out of the box and immediately turned on the three police officers.

Judy ducked under the swarm and raced toward the door, "I'll get her!"

Dashing outside she saw Casper running toward a black van, nearly

tripping over her feet as she ran. Judy quickly pulled out the dart gun and aimed it at the bear's neck. A sudden sting stabbed Judy behind the ear and she yelped, her finger pulling the trigger. The bear let out a gasp of surprise as the dart hit her shoulder instead but she didn't stop as she headed toward the van.

"Stop!" Judy called out, ignoring the bee sting as she ran after Casper, reloading her dart gun. She fired again just as Casper was about to close the van door, hitting the bear square in the neck.

"OW!" the bear growled then immediately started to wobble, "Ohâ€|"

Judy jumped back as Casper fell out of her van onto the dirt, trying to pull herself off the ground but failing.

"Casper Barret, you are under arrest," Judy informed her, pulling the stinger out from behind her ear.

"Noâ€|" the bear moaned drowsily, "Duhâ€|" And then Casper passed out.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow."

>Judy turned around and saw Nick and Aaron running out of the factory, their fur sticking on end. Judy could hear the bees buzzing in the factory but only a few fluttered out and they didn't come after the fox and the deer.<p>

"_What_ did I tell you," Nick growled as he stomped over to Judy, his arms and tail sticking out and his teeth gritted in pain. "_What _did I tell you?"

"Did you count the stings?" Judy asked worriedly, knowing a body could only handle so many stings before it became fatal.

The look Nick gave her was all the answer she needed.

"Oh, and Officer Hopps," Aaron spoke up, his entire body still tensed up. "If you're wondering why the bees are no longer following us-they chased us around the factory you see-it's because most of them have passed on and left their stingers with _us_."

>"Why didn't you just follow me outside?" she asked them, "They might've flew away."<p>

"That was like a thousand bees, Carrots; logic had no place in my head at that moment!"

"Let's just go," Aaron moaned in pain and started to drag Casper to the patrol car. "Officer Hopps you can drive."

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"I hope she rots," Nick growled as he and Judy entered their apartment. "With uhâ€|who's her cellmate?"

"Wade Jones," Judy answered, closing the door behind her. "Remember, that wolf called Frothy?"

>"Ah, yes," Nick grinned evilly, "That is sweet justice, Fluff."

When they had returned to the precinct that got some odd looks, dragging a still unconscious bear into the precinct while Nick and Aaron continuously said 'ow', before Clawhauser had called someone in to send Casper on her way and relieved Nick and Aaron of their stings. But Nick still wasn't in a good mood.

"You're just tired," Judy nestled into his side as she led him to their bedroom. "Bogo's right, we both need some sleep." She emphasized her point with a yawn.

Nick nodded, still grumbling and crawled onto the bed, sprawling his limbs out. Judy placed her phone on the bedside table just in case anyone called before tucking Nick in. She slid under the covers next to him but before she could really get comfortable Nick's arm wrapped around her and pulled her into his chest. Judy smiled against his warm fur and fell asleep instantly.

6. Chapter 6

Ch. 5: Double Date

It was already evening when Judy woke up, Nick still curled around her. She had a momentary panic before she remembered it was Saturday and their day off. She crawled out from under Nick's arm and stretched, yawning.

"Wake up, Nick," she gently shook the fox's shoulder. "Come on, we've slept all day."

Nick let out a tired growl and covered his face with a pillow. Judy pouted.

"Nick, its Saturday. It's our day off," Judy told him. "Let's make the most of it."

That got the fox's attention; he sat up, the pillow falling off his head as looked down at her. "Day off, you said?"

Judy nodded, "Yeah, why-"

She let out a yelp as Nick pinned her onto her back with a wolfish grin. "Then we _must_ make the most of it, darling."

Judy rolled her eyes but smiled, "When I said that I meant we should get up and have something to eat, maybe go out for a walk or shop?"

"We can do that later," Nick murmured, his lips tracing her neck.

Judy giggled then let out a small gasp as Nick started to nibble on her neck, his paw sliding under her shirt.

She pulled his face away, making the fox frown slightly before Judy kissed him under the chin and he immediately started to purr and even wagged his tail. She had learned a few days after living together that this was his favorite spot.

"That's cruel and unusual punishment, Officer," Nick said as they rolled over so Judy was on top of him.

She laughed and brushed their noses together, "You love it."

Nick smiled cheekily before reaching over her and grabbing her tail, Judy jumped in surprise making Nick laugh. "Don't tug there," she complained, crawling off his chest. Her nerves were on end and she realized Nick just found her soft spot. If he found out he'd never let it go.

Nick whimpered and tried to pull her back onto him,
"_Carrots_â€|"

"_Blueberries_â€|"

Nick stopped, cocking a brow, "Blueberries? Where'd that come from?"

"It just came to me actually," Judy admitted, and then looked up with a smile. "But I like the sound of it."

The two cleaned themselves up an hour later and headed outside, deciding to eat out for dinner, which was technically breakfast for them.

The two had only taken a step out of their apartment building when they were suddenly lifted into the air by a large hug, loud jingling ringing in their ears.

"_Sven_," Judy greeted happily. Nick mumbled a quiet hey, clearly discomfited by the hug.

"Officer Bunny and her fox," Sven gushed, spinning around with the two in his arms. "It's been an eternity, how are you? How's the dating life? Have either of you proposed yet?"

"Sven, let them breathe," a calmer voice spoke up. Judy looked over Sven's shoulder to see the reindeer's mate, Charlie. She was smiling softly at them as Sven placed the two back on the ground.

"How was your vacation?" Nick asked the two. Sven and Charlie had gone to a ski resort outside of Zootopia.

"Chilly," Charlie wrapped her arms around herself and shuddered, "But fun."

"Especially when we had to cuddle to keep you warm," Sven grinned devilishly.

Charlie smirked at him, "But next we're going to the beach, no cuddling there."

"I'll make due with skinny dipping," Sven replied. He then swung his head around to face the fox and rabbit again, the bells on his antlers swinging with him. "So, are you two on duty right now?"

Judy shook her head, "We were about to go out and get something to eat."

Sven clapped his hooves together in delight, "That's fantastic! Let Charlie and I treat you to dinner, I've been dying for a double date with you two."

"He's not kidding," Charlie added, "Before our vacation he was crawling around his office on all fours and moaning."

"That couldn't have been easy on Winter," Nick responded.

Sven let out a depressed snort, "I wouldn't know, she's dumped Charlie and me."

>"She did not," Charlie retorted, "Since I've been helping you out at your office more she decided to get a second job so we could spend time together."<p>

"You say that now but just you wait," Sven moaned, "She's not gonna want to come back."

Charlie rolled her eyes but turned her attention to Judy, "Winter's a workaholic, she'll come back as long as Sven gives her something to do. Anyway would you two like to join us for dinner? We can even catch a movie."

"We'd love to," Judy answered and grabbed Nick's paw, leading him after her as Sven and Charlie led the way.

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The four decided dinner at a buffet, Charlie and Judy talking about the vacation and past cases while Sven and Nick chowed down.

"That poor baby," Charlie said in sympathy when Judy ended up talking about Suzy and Eleanor Sugar. "Well, I'm positive you'll find her mother soon."

Judy smiled sadly, "Thanks for the confidenceâ€|"

Nick reached his paw out to hold the rabbit's who squeezed it gratefully. "I just hope Suzy is okay without us."

Judy went quiet, her ears drooping. Charlie and Nick shared a frown while Sven swallowed loudly. "That's enough depressing mood for this night. Nick, come with me."

"I'd rather not," Nick said, looking partially terrified. But Sven reached across the table, grabbed the fox's arm and dragged him across the restaurant.

Charlie and Judy didn't know what the plan was until they saw Sven and Nick walk onto the karaoke stage.

"Oh, no," Charlie breathed in horror.

Judy glanced at the cheetah before turning back to Nick and Sven, the fox looked uncomfortable as Sven was searching through the songs.

"How good is Sven's singing?" Judy asked his mate.

"Uhâ€|"

"From a scale of one to ten," she offered.

Charlie swallowed, "Negative five. He can write songsâ€|he just can't sing."

Judy glanced at Sven who was still trying to choose a song though now it looked like Nick was trying to help him.

"Are you sure you're not exaggerating?" she asked the cheetah.

"Judy, we have to get him off that stage right now."

Judy stood up along with the cheetah and followed her to the stage, expecting Charlie to have some elaborate plan to get her mate off the stage, but instead Charlie just grabbed him by the arm and started to roughly drag him away.

"But-but-MUSIC!"

"No," Charlie said bluntly.

"I want to hear Nick sing!"

The fox shrugged, "I'm not that great."

"Yes, you are," Judy said immediately, making Nick frown at her.

Sven gasped and pointed at the rabbit, "Officer Bunny! You sing with him! I want a duet!"

Judy's ears perked at the thought, "Wellâ€|I'm not as good as Nick but I guessâ€|I can give it a go?"

Judy hopped onto the stage and Sven allowed Charlie to drag him back to their table. Judy looked through the song choices while Nick looked over her shoulder.

"Carrots," he breathed into her ear, "I can't sing."

"Of course you can," Judy replied, keeping her eyes on the list of possible duets. "You have the voice of an angel; I've told you that before."

"I can't sing in front of crowds."

Judy looked up at him, "You have stage fright?"

His ears lowered adorably and Judy took his paw in hers. "Hey," she breathed, "I'm right here. I've got ya. The crowd will love you, and if the few who are tone-deaf throw food at you, I'll arrest them. Okay?"

Nick swallowed loudly, casting an unsure glance at the rest of the restaurant, most of the mammals were enjoying their meal and not paying attention to them; he turned back to Judy and nodded.

She smiled and finally picked a duet, one of her favorite songs

growing up back in Bunnyburrow.

The bouncy music started to play and Judy grinned as Sven gave a loud applause from his seat, Charlie gave a much more subdued clap.

Nick handed her a microphone and she winked at him, "Ready to blow the roof off this place?"

Nick started, "_Summer loving had me a blast, oh yeah_."

"_Summer loving happened so fast_," Judy sang along.

"_I met a bunny crazy for me_," Nick took her paw as he sang and Judy curtsied.

"_Met a fox cute as can be_."

"_Summer days drifting away, to, uh oh, those summer nights_!"

When the chorus hit Sven took a deep intake of breath to sing along but Charlie quickly covered his mouth, singing for him instead while random mammals across the restaurant joined in, giving the fox and rabbit encouragement.

Nick continued, "_She swam by me, she got a cramp_."

"_He ran by me, got my suit damp_."

"_I saved her life, she nearly drowned_," Nick placed a paw over his chest, his arm moving in a dramatic sweep.

Judy rolled her eyes, "_He showed off, splashing around_."

Nick took her paw and spun her around his arm as they continued the song, the fox's fur no longer prickling with nerves and both their smiles matching. Charlie and the crowd continued to sing the chorus for them, smiling at the two obviously in love mammals while Sven resigned himself to snapping his hooves to the rhythm.

Judy popped her foot up and fluttered her eyelashes at Nick, "_He got friendly, holding my hand_."

Nick leaned forward to where their noses nearly touched and winked, "_She got friendly, down in the sand_."

"_He was sweet just turned eighteen_."

"_Well, she was good you know what I mean_."

Judy swayed in place as the song started to end, the bouncy music residing, "_It turned colder, that's where it ends_."

She cast Nick a mournful look that the fox returned with big eyes, "_So I told her, we'd still be friends_."

"_Then we made our true love vow_," Judy clutched her chest.

Nick lifted his head as if he was deep in thought, "_Wonder what she's doing_ _now_."

The two sang in unison, "_Summer dreams, ripped at the seams. Bu-ut oh, those summer nights_!"

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"You two were _spectacular_!"

The four friends were walking down the street to the cinema, the street lamps lighting their way. Sven had given them a standing ovation and was even trying to get them to consider singing a part time job.

He and Judy walked ahead of their significant others, talking animatedly about the music. Charlie and Nick walked side by side at a much calmer pace.

"So how is the dating life," Charlie asked him.

Nick shrugged, "Judy and me hung out so much it's almost like nothing's changed."

Charlie chuckled, "Okay then rephrase, how's being allowed to kiss Judy whenever you want like?"

Nick's eyes went to said bunny and he smiled dotingly, "Perfect."

Charlie recognized that look, the same look she always had when she looked at her ridiculous but loveable reindeer. But there was something in Nick and Judy's relationship that she didn't have in hers, there was something that ran deeper between them other than friendship and love—it was a type of dependency. And despite herself Charlie dare wonder what Nick would do if his bunny was suddenly gone.

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Arriving at the cinema they had the choice between a romantic comedy and a horror movie. Sven wanted to see the horror flick despite the others telling him it was perfectly fine if they saw the rom-com instead.

Their protests fell on deaf ears and they ended up watching the scary movie. Judy for one enjoyed the thrill of the suspenseful frights and ended up laughing at the few jump scares the film had, finding the demonic spirit almost cartoonish in behavior.

Charlie meanwhile was bored and spent more time enjoying her popcorn and calming down Sven who was terrified of the film despite his gusto when suggesting it.

And Nick, well Nick wasn't paying attention in the slightest, using the dark theater to his advantage to cuddle up next to Judy who barely noticed.

An hour later the four exited the cinema, Judy telling Nick what had happened in the film while Charlie calmed Sven down who was still on edge.

"I told you we should've watched the romantic comedy," Charlie told

him. "But you never listen to me."

"I do listen to you," Sven mumbled, he was walking ahead of them.

"What did I remind you to do this morning?" Charlie demanded.

"Uhâ€¦ To remind you that you look gorgeous," he turned around and walked backwards so he could meet her eye, "You look gorgeous."

Charlie stopped to look over to Judy and Nick and rolled her eyes at them. Judy snickered but then Nick suddenly shot forward, past Judy and Charlie and grabbed Sven, clutching his shirt and pulling him forward so quickly the two fell onto the pavement.

A second later an ivory blur charged past the spot Sven had been standing only to slam into the wall of a closed dry cleaner shop.

Judy and Charlie hurried over to their side and stared at the mammal that had suddenly tried to assault them. It was a goat, his fur white, with ginger patches all across his body. The goat's gray eyes stared at them, wide and feral, and Judy saw the blotch of blue on his neck and a lump of fear clogged her throat and she suddenly couldn't breathe. She saw Nick going rigid and she knew he noticed it too, Charlie, beside her, started to take slow steps back.

The goat staggered away from the wall and made a growling noise, his eyes honing in on them and Judy cursed herself for not bringing along any sort of weapon.

The wild stranger took a menacing step forward and lowered his head, ready to charge at the group again, Nick and Sven looking ready to jump up and meet him head on while Charlie looked ready to bolt.

Just then sirens blared and Judy took her eyes off the goat a split second to see a patrol car heading toward them, and then the goat let out a feral yell and ran at them. Nick and Sven sprung to their feet but before the goat could even graze them he fell to the pavement, a dart sticking out of his shoulder.

The patrol car screeched to a halt and out jumped Aaron, looking frazzled and ready to faint. "I-I was just doing the evening patrol and he-he came out of _nowhere_!"

"Where'd you see him?" Judy demanded as Nick hurried to the car to find a set of pawcuffs.

"I was out near that donut shop down the street," Aaron explained, staring at the goat as if he would jump up and rip them to ribbons. "He just stumbled out of some alley, I asked him if he was okay and he charged at the car, head butting it. I turned on the sirens and I guessed it scared him because he ran off and I chased him." He looked to Sven and Charlie, "Are you two okay?"

Sven nodded, releasing a breath and then turned to Charlie.

The cheetah had her arms wrapped around herself and was staring at

the goat in terror, her entire body shaking uncontrollably and her eyes wide and far away. Judy realized Charlie wasn't seeing them or the savage goat, she was seeing a ferocious lioness and a deceitful spider monkey who made her bend to their will.

"Charlotte," Sven breathed, stepping toward her. It was the first time Judy had ever heard him call her by her real name. "Charlotte, come here."

He opened his arms and the cheetah met him half way, tackling into his arms and burying herself into his neck, still shaking.

Sven mumbled softly into her ear as he held her close, the cheetah's shaking was slowly lessening. Meanwhile Nick was able to cuff the goat and Aaron helped put him in the back of the patrol car.

"The tranquilizer will last until we get to the precinct," the deer assured them.

"This goat needs to go to the hospital," Nick replied, looking between the goat and Charlie, sympathy in his green eyes.

"Do you need us to walk you home?" Judy asked Sven.

The reindeer smiled softly down at her, "We'll catch a cab; don't you worry. You just do your job, Officer Bunny."

Judy smiled assuredly at him, "We will, get Charlie home safe, okay?"

Sven nodded soberly and coaxed his mate down the street, pulling out his cell to order a cab.

Judy and Nick crawled into the passenger seat while Aaron took driver, the deer still looked weary and the rabbit reached forward to give his shoulder a pat. "It's fine, Aaron. Everything's fine."

She glanced at Nick as she finished her sentence and the fox returned the look then subtly shook his head. It was not fine.

Before Aaron could call in the police radio crackled to life and Clawhauser's voice filled the car: "We have a code 207A at the Department of Family and Cubs Services!"

Code 207Aâ€|Attempt at kidnappingâ€|Suzy.

Judy's breath stopped.

End
file.